

20 September 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism

FROM :
Chief, Terrorism Branch

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SUBJECT : Translation and Processing of Foreign Language Documents on International Terrorism

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1. Background. This memorandum contains a preliminary assessment of the value to the Intelligence Community's terrorism components of the FBIS program to translate and disseminate foreign language terrorism documents. This memorandum also identifies related issues requiring further IICT attention. The undersigned was requested to undertake this survey by the Chairman at the IICT meeting on 26 August 1982.

2. To date, FBIS has translated and disseminated 14 volumes in the series Worldwide Report, Terrorism. IICT member agencies were asked to provide informal evaluations of the overall value of the program and to identify those documents of high interest and of no interest. The Office of Security/Threat Analysis Group/Department of State, which initially provided most of the foreign language documents for translation, and the Terrorism Branch/Central Intelligence Agency responded with detailed evaluations; The Defense Intelligence Agency, U.S. Secret Service and Army Intelligence Command also responded.

3. Discussion. The respondents believed the FBIS program to have positive value and favored its continuation. Evaluations of translations ranged from moderately useful to of high interest and great value. The respondents were agreed that, at a minimum, the translations were valuable background for terrorism analysts; State, CIA and Army believed translated documents often included unique and valuable primary source material. Those agencies that evaluated individual documents rated about half useful and half of little to no value.

4. The most valuable translated documents were such primary source materials as official government documents, terrorist communiques, training manuals, tracts written by terrorists and interviews with terrorists. Also of high value were documents containing information not normally available through

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intelligence channels or information on obscure organizations or groups about which little is known including ASALA, GRAPO and the Revolutionary Cells. The following were among those documents uniformly identified as containing great value to analysts:

- The RAF Texte, 1977.
- The book "Terrorism in Spain" by Alejandro Munoz Alonso, 1982.
- Broadcasts by "Voice of Lebanese Armenians."
- Der Spiegel interview with Hans Joachim Klein, an RZ terrorist, 7 August 1978.
- Various issues of the RZ newspaper.
- Various ETA communiques.
- The book "Men of ETA" by Jose Maria Portell, 1979.
- Memoirs of an underground Italian terrorist.

5. The documents of least value generally included unverified, spurious or uninformative press articles, documents containing well-known information, and materials concerning groups and regions of little or no priority to terrorism units. In some cases, agency evaluation of certain documents differed, largely reflecting varied departmental interests and priorities. For instance, CIA generally found useful documents containing behavioral and group dynamics information; State/TAG rated such material of low value. On the other hand, State/TAG rated highly a document on the Japanese Red Army, and CIA believed it to be of little interest.

6. Of the other respondents, DIA believed the translations included excellent background material of particular value for research purposes. DIA commented that its reaction was tempered by the fact that it has an in-house translation capability, making it less reliant on FBIS translations than other agencies. Army found the translations valuable and had used several documents as primary source materials for its monthly terrorism summary. Secret Service said its foreign area analysts, particularly those covering Europe, found the translations useful as background.

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7. Conclusion. Among the respondents, there appears to be a rough consensus that the FBIS translation program is of value and should be continued. But, the following cautionary notes should be weighed by the IICT: the responding agencies represented less than half of permanent IICT membership; agencies that responded most positively were those that provided the bulk of materials for translations, as in the case of State/TAG, or those whose analytic responsibilities required utilization of such materials; and, materials to be translated in the future are less likely to be of uniformly high value than those provided FBIS, many of which had been screened and retained for years awaiting translation. The survey, therefore, probably was skewed in the direction of a positive evaluation and continuation of the program. Those agencies that rarely utilize translated documents or that might have pronounced reservations about the program, were not heard from during this canvas.

8. The survey surfaced issues that will require the attention of the IICT and, in some cases, of member agencies:

- Access. There are apparently a large volume of foreign language documents related to terrorism in existing intelligence channels but not normally accessible to terrorism units. The volume and value of these documents will have to be determined as part of an overall sizing of the translation task. A related issue involves materials accessible, and in some cases, translated by individual agencies but not circulated to other agencies.
- Screening. A careful culling and screening process will be required to insure that translation resources are used efficiently. Individuals that screen will require both language capability and familiarization with terrorism issues.
- Translation resources. Some agencies appear to have in-house translation capabilities applicable to this program. The terrorism community will need to identify those resources and coordinate their employment.
- Dissemination. Wide and comprehensive dissemination will be required to justify costs associated with obtaining, screening and translating documents. This appears to be a particular problem regarding materials that are translated in-house and normally not given outside dissemination.

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- Funding. The pilot FBIS translation program has been funded by the Intelligence Community Staff through FY82. The IICT, which itself has no budget or authority to allocate budgetary resources, nonetheless, will play the key role in identifying general funding levels required should the translation program continue.
- Sizing the task. Related to the above is the early requirement to determine the volume of materials that merit translation over the long term, and the consequent screening, translation and dissemination resources that such a program will involve.

9. Recommendations. The IICT should decide at an early date to continue the FBIS translation and dissemination program and direct that a working group size the task and recommend procedures and mechanisms for obtaining, screening and translating terrorism documents. The IICT should assist in identifying sources of funding for this program with particular attention to FY83, which is not at present funded.

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1 - DD/S/OGI

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OGI/IIC/TR/[redacted] (20 Sept 82)

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cc: [redacted]

Staff, SE-27, HQS
FBIS, 212 Key

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REMARKS

I recommend we go ahead with the Terrorism book, and that it be added to our unfunded list for '83. ✓

Upshot of our meeting yesterday with [] is that while she does not dispute our view that the book did not get a clearly positive endorsement from IICT members, the IC Staff view is that major consumers (State, CIA, and DIA) like it and want to see it continue; and that other Community consumers have expressed support. The issue is one of the Administration's (and therefore the DCI's) top priorities; therefore, there are benefits to be won (or lost) by FBIS in continuing (or discontinuing) the book.

OVER

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She says [] & Co. will insist on creation of some inter-agency group to screen materials for publication--which should blunt criticism that they respond to parochial interests--while FBIS of course retains discretion to question individual items and recommend alternative forms of handling.

The funding question was not resolved, except in the sense that if no one else offers to contribute, FBIS will meet '83 costs.

I see nothing to be gained by continuing opposition to this. It does, no doubt, respond to a DCI-perceived priority issue. I said I would recommend favorably to D/FBIS. Suggested tack with [] a brief reply to his memo saying we agree, subject to formation of an effective screening mechanism and to eventual review of value (say, after 6 months) by the ICS or the IICT, IF THE latter still exists at that point.

[]
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D/FBIS: O.K., but as far as I am concerned [], as the FBIS person responsible for the publication, will have ~~xxx~~ final say on what is published. It is still an FBIS publication no matter who does what preliminary screening. jdc

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